

FORBES DRY CLEANERS – CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

FACT SHEET

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (EGLE) will soon begin soil removal activities at Davis Street properties adjacent to the former Forbes Dry Cleaners located at 923 Ecorse Road in Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan. The dry cleaner operated from the 1940s until 2016, leaving soil contaminated with the hazardous dry-cleaning solvent, tetrachloroethylene (PCE).



Forbes Dry Cleaners building and signage, July 2017

ACTIVITIES TO DATE

In 2016, the dry cleaner business permanently closed.

In 2017, the property was foreclosed. Washtenaw County had environmental investigations conducted showing soil and groundwater was contaminated with PCE. Washtenaw County paid for the transport and disposal of PCE waste that had been left on-site and the building was declared unsuitable for occupation. Property ownership was transferred to the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority to facilitate future corrective actions to be undertaken by EGLE (then the DEQ).

In 2018, EGLE investigations showed PCE was detected both on-site and off-site in soil, soil vapor, and groundwater. PCE is a volatile organic compound which can form a vapor from soil or groundwater sources and volatilize into indoor air. To assess the vapor risk, seasonal sampling of soil vapor and indoor air was conducted on the residential properties to the north of the Forbes property.

High concentrations of PCE in soil were discovered along an abandoned sanitary sewer running north from the dry cleaner building to Davis Street and under two residential properties. The sewer line was damaged by tree roots, which may have aided in the release of PCE onto the properties and along the sewer line.

In late 2018, building abatement in preparation for demolition began. Excavation of PCE-contaminated soil was selected as the preferred remedial option for the Forbes Dry Cleaners property due to input from stakeholders and evaluation of alternatives.

In 2019, the Forbes Dry Cleaner building was demolished leaving only the concrete slab in place. EGLE had anticipated removing the slab and contaminated soil to fully remediate the site; however, the project costs were higher than anticipated due to costs associated with disposal of PCE-contaminated concrete and soil. The project temporarily ran out of funds in early 2019 until more funding could be allocated.

EGLE continued to collect and analyze data from the seasonal vapor intrusion sampling. Results led to EGLE's recommendation that four of the homes sampled be provided vapor mitigation systems. The off-site soil contamination on the northern adjacent residential properties was further evaluated and alternative approaches for remediating the properties were compared and discussed with stakeholders.

In early 2020, EGLE began planning the soil excavation of the northern residential properties. Workplan specifications for the off-site remediation were drafted, several contractors' bids on the work were compared, and a contractor was hired to conduct the remedial work. Designs for vapor mitigation systems were drafted for the residential homes with a potential for vapor intrusion. Two of the four homes have had vapor mitigation systems installed to date.



Concrete blocks with PCE from the Forbes Dry Cleaners building demolition, January 2019

CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

- Excavation and disposal of contaminated soils and abandoned sanitary sewer line.
- Dewatering and treatment of contaminated groundwater during excavation.
- Backfilling of excavation with clean fill material.
- Reconstruction of demolished garages, driveways, and fences.
- Continued investigation and monitoring of contaminated groundwater and soil vapor.
- Vapor mitigation system installations in two remaining homes.

LOOKING AHEAD

Target Date Spring 2021 → EGLE's goal is to conduct soil excavation and remediation of the former Forbes Dry Cleaners property to prepare for redevelopment.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have any questions while EGLE is working to address this risk to public health and the environment, please contact Sara Nedrich, Ph.D., Project Manager, at 517-281-1510 or email to NedrichS@Michigan.gov.

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